

To the Chairman of the FCC, Michael Powell:

I am writing to you today to comment on Docket No. 02-277, The Biennial Review of the FCC's broadcast media ownership rules. I am voicing my support to retain all the FCC rules in question.

When I was a young man in the late 1960's, my father, then the editor of a newspaper trade-journal called The Publishers' Auxiliary, testified before a U.S. Senate sub-committee against the potential exemption of the newspaper industry from the antitrust laws. He spent years engaged in that battle, trying to save the industry he loved, and the democratic freedoms that he felt that it preserved, from collapsing into a mere shadow of it's former glory. As we all now know, that effort failed, and we are far worse off as a democracy for the loss of those formerly independent public forums and voices.

Since that time, our country has been terribly served -and its democracy and public discourse terribly impoverished- as the public media have become concentrated in fewer and fewer hands, hands which now serve only to tend the till, and not to serve the public. I am extremely alarmed that your commission appears set to pave the way for yet more concentration of media power.

Your commission has already made a huge error in having struck down the potential for small, low-power radio stations to serve local markets. Now you propose to open the floodgates ever wider to the imposition of "group-think" as you are poised to throw out the few remaining restrictions on cross-ownership, ownership caps, the dual-network prohibition, etc. This would be a grave disservice to the country and its people.

Your agency is not meant to protect and promote business at all costs, as you and the industry lobbyists seem so fervently to believe. Rather, it is meant to serve the populace at large, ensuring that the public airwaves are used to promote the greatest public good. Your proposed elimination of virtually every restriction upon media ownership will continue the shocking decline in public discourse. Frankly, it is difficult to consider that this is, in fact, not one of its primary intents.

Although I consider your father to be among the most honorable of men presently serving our country, I was frankly appalled that you ever accepted your nomination to your present post. Given the position that your father holds, and the effect that your agency can have on the information available to the public, it is one of the most blatant and far-reaching conflicts of interest that I have seen in public life.

I challenge you to prove that you are as honorable as your father is, and to dare to stand up for the American people by retaining the present restrictions on media ownership. In so doing, you have the opportunity and power to do so much good for the country. Your failure to do so at this critical juncture would ensure that your name is forever linked to the failure of the American experiment.

God save America!

Michael McGuire